

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7479
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 1913

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR PGOV WB US
SUBJECT NATIONAL AIRLINES SERVICE TO BERLIN

REF: A) STATE 189499, B) BONN 14422

1. MISSION SHARES EMBASSY BONN'S ASSESSMENT THAT PROPOSED NATIONAL AIRLINES SERVICE TO BERLIN VIA AMSTERDAM WOULD BE A WELCOM ADDITION TO THE CITY'S AIR CONNECTIONS TO THE WEST. BERLINERS WOULD BE PLEASED AT INTRODUCTION OF NEWER, MORE COMFORTABLE DC-10S WHICH WOULD OBIVIATE PRESENTLY SOMEWHAT IRKSOME NECESSITY TO CHANGE AIRCRAFT AT INTERMEDIATE STOPS WHEN FLYING BETWEEN BERLIN AND U.S. DESTINATIONS.(TRANSATLANTIC PASSENGERS MUST NOW CHANGE TO SMALLER GAUGE B-727 OR BAC-111 AIRCRAFT IN LONDON/PARIS OR THE FRG.) ADDED ELEMENT OF FRESH COMPETITION IN FIELD OF SCHEDULED CARRIERS WOULD ALSO BE WELCOMED LOCALLY.

2. AT THE SAME TIME WE ALSO HAVE DOUBTS THAT A MARKET EXISTS TO SUPPORT AN ADDITIONAL CARRIER WITHOUT SOME
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NEGATIVE EFFECT ON PASSENGER TRAFFIC ON THE IGS. ALL PASSENGERS TRAVELING SCHEDULED FLIGHTS TO AND FROM BERLIN AND THE U.S. PRESENTLY FEED INTO THE IGS VIA PAN AM. BA OR AF, EXCEPT THOSE ON A DAILY PAN AM NON-STOP TO ZURICH AND ONE DAILY BA ROUNDTRIP TO LONDON. FURTHER CONSIDERATION WOULD BE IMPACT NATIONAL WOULD HAVE ON OTHER TRANSATLANTIC CARRIERS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE FRG. AS IN

THE CASE OF PAN AM BUDGET FARES INTRODUCED IN BERLIN, NATIONAL COULD ATTRACT BUSINESS FROM WEST GERMANS WHO COME TO BERLIN SOLELY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LOWER RATES AVAILABLE HERE.

3. A RECENT SURGE IN PASSENGER TRAFFIC ON SCHEDULED FLIGHTS TO AND FROM BERLIN (UP 3.5 PERCENT IN JULY OVER A YEAR AGO VS. DECLINES OF 2.61 PERCENT AND 3.25 PERCENT IN MAY AND JUNE, RESPECTIVELY) IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY ESTABLISHED TO WARRANT OPTIMISM. WE WOULD ACCORDINGLY BE MUCH INTERESTED IN SEEING MARKET PROJECTIONS UPON WHICH NATIONAL WOULD BASE ITS APPLICATION.

4. SHOULD NATIONAL EVENTUALLY BE APPROVED, WE DOUBT THAT SOVIETS WOULD GO BEYOND PRO FORMA OBJECTION IN BASIC AS THEY ROUTINELY DO FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO AND FROM BERLIN WHICH DO NOT STOP IN THE FRG. IN MISSION'S OPINION LIKELY SOVIET REACTION SHOULD NOT BE WEIGHED AS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR WHEN CONSIDERING MERITS OF NATIONAL'S PROPOSAL.
NELSON

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